



HANDOUT PS-1

DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A Significant Other (SO) is someone who:

- You trust
- You care about
- Sees you frequently
- Cares about you.



HANDOUT **PS-2**

MIKE

Mike has been off probation for six months and has not had anything to drink in that whole time. He's turned his life around. He's got a part-time job in the library of a local community college, which is where he met his girlfriend. This is the first relationship like this he's ever had. He can really talk to Ellen. She is taking courses to prepare her to be a social worker. Mike hasn't told Ellen about the substance abuse in his past. He doesn't want it to color his relationship. Now, for the first time in a long time though, he's feeling cravings. He knows it's because he's stressed financially, because his hours got cut. But it's having an impact on his relationship with Ellen. He knows he isn't always "all there" when they're together, and he's occasionally short-tempered with her.

HANDOUT PS-3

ENLISTING SUPPORT FROM A SIGNIFICANT OTHER

- 1.** Be honest, and ask for help. Because this is very important, you should carefully plan the time and place for this conversation.
 - You and your SO should both have time and energy to make this a quality discussion. So don't take this step if either of you is rushed or very tired.
- 2.** You'll want to develop a plan with your SO, about how he or she can help you.
 - Think about this ahead of time, but don't get "married" to your ideas. You'll need to be open to other ideas, and flexible in your responses.
- 3.** When you start the conversation, remember: having a problem is nothing to be ashamed of. And working to resolve your problem is something you should be proud of and approach in a practical way.
 - Show that, in your words and your body language.
- 4.** Your SO will be better able to help you if he or she understands the Stages of Change.
 - Explain the stages of change, and what stage you're in.
- 5.** Explain the different ways your SO can support you by:
 - Being non-judgmental
 - Being open about concerns and problems — thus respecting your ability to cope, and your ability to change
 - Being thoughtful about the best time and place to express concerns or talk about problems
 - Understanding that a balanced lifestyle is particularly important for you
 - Rewarding you when you've been "good" — and by not "punishing" you if you slip.



- 6.** Work with your SO, and use your Problem-Solving Guidelines to develop a plan for ways your SO can help you. For example, by:
 - Not pressuring you into environments that are high-risk for you
 - Helping you recognize high-risk situations
 - Helping you develop alternatives or better options for times when you are at-risk
 - Helping you develop a balanced lifestyle with interests and friendships that aren't rooted in drinking or drugs.

- 7.** Make "The Plan" a joint project, and monitor it together. Agree that both will benefit from feedback.
 - Be ready to help your SO understand how to interact without being judgmental or threatening
 - Be sure that you aren't judgmental or that you don't "talk down" when doing this. Remember that being non-judgmental and non-threatening are skills that you've been learning. Consider sharing relevant guidelines with your SO, if he or she is interested.

HANDOUT PS-4

PAIRS EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Each of you should brief your partner on the Significant Other involved in your plan. Provide enough information about the relationship so that later, your partner can do a reasonable job of playing your SO in a role-play.

Example: James is my brother. He's two years younger than I am, and he's a pretty easygoing guy. He likes having fun, and doesn't often start serious conversations. But the few times that I have talked to him about problems, he's been real good about it. He'd start out kidding around, but once he knew I was serious, he was pretty helpful.

- 2.** Both of you should then share the plan you developed with each other.
- 3.** Both of you should then develop a role-play for Partner 1's plan. Partner 1 plays himself, and Partner 2 takes the part of the Significant Other. After the role-play, both of you should discuss what worked and what didn't, and decide whether (and how) the plan requires "fine-tuning."
- 4.** Go through the same process with Partner 2. Develop a role-play, and after that do any fine-tuning of the plan that seems required.